

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

010156Z Jun 05

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 002376

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - ROBERT
PALLADINO
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN

Summary: Major Taiwan newspapers shifted some of their focus away from politics this weekend, and offered front-page stories on various topics such as poisoned local energy drinks, the funeral of Taiwan's "Godfather," and top music awards. The dailies did, however, focus some attention on constitutional reforms to be ratified by the National Assembly. The front-page banner headline of the pro-independence "Liberty Times" on May 29 read: "300 Members of the National Assembly to Meet; Political Parties Take Moves to Secure Votes." The pro-unification "United Daily News" followed the next day with a front-page banner that read: "National Assembly Kicks Off Meeting. President Chen Shui-bian and DPP Chairman Su Chen-chang Keep Their Eyes on DPP Deputies." Editorially, the Chinese-language dailies in Taipei commented on constitutional amendments and political manipulation. Pro-independence newspapers continued to criticize China on their op-ed pages for using the power of Taiwan's opposition parties to achieve the goal of annexing Taiwan. End summary.

A) "United States Loses Leading Role In Taiwan Strait - Part II"

Lai I-chung, Director for Foreign Policy Studies of the Taiwan Thinktank, wrote in the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] in the second part of his two-part commentary on cross-Strait relations (5/28):

"One key development after the meetings between [KMT Chairman] Lien [Chan], [PFP Chairman James] Soong, and [Chinese President] Hu [Jintao] is that the United States has lost its leading role in the Taiwan Strait, and this is why the U.S. State Department spokesman said a few days ago that the United States did not intend to control, so it could not control the cross-Strait situation. .

"The main reason [why] the United States has fallen into such a tragic predicament, besides Hu Jintao's sophisticated manipulations, Lien's and Soong's gutlessness, and the Taiwan government's panicked leadership, is the United States' own arrogance and stupidity.

"There have been rumors in society that when the United States' agency in Taiwan met with the Pan-Blue camp, the Pan-Blue political powers used the [statement] that [they] would support the arms procurements after the visits to China to ease the United States' concerns, plus it is also rumored that Lien's and Soong's meetings with Hu Jintao could also facilitate the Bian-Hu meeting in the future, so the United States did not show worry in public. In the past the United States could do nothing about the Pan-Blue camp's blocking of the arms procurements, now it can be considered that the Pan-Blue camp has used the arms procurements in an almost threatening way to get its pass to China, and we can see whether the arms procurement [bill] passes [in the Legislative Yuan], the United States has been 'had' by the Pan-Blue, and this has been the United States' first miscalculation.

". The United States' second miscalculation is that it put too little weight on the meetings between Lien, Soong and Hu. Even when Washington came to realize the situation was not good, it could do nothing but admit unhappily that the United States has no control over the Taiwan Strait situation.

". [T]he [reasons that] the United States managed to have initiatives regarding the Taiwan Strait situation in the past, besides its own projected military power, also included [the fact that] Taiwan's democracy had been unwilling to accept political arrangements by the Chinese Communist Party's authoritarian regime, and the United States' interference was justified as a means to protect Taiwan's democracy. But now because Hu Jintao has started to penetrate Taiwan's political agenda, and has become as justified as the United States by controlling the Pan-Blue camp, the United States' ability to initiate Taiwan Strait [matters] has been nullified. From now on, the United States is no longer a controller who defines the status quo

in Taiwan Strait,' but has become a competitor in competition with China over political influence in Taiwan, and whether there will be a 'Bian-Hu meeting' no longer means much.

"Hu Jintao is a sophisticated manipulator, Lien Chan is gutless, James Soong is an adventurer, and the United States miscalculates, but if the governing national security team could hold its breath for the sake of long-term strategic consideration and play a leadership role, Hu Jintao's risky step to meet Lien and Soong could become a new wave of pressure on China after international society's opposition to 'The Anti-Secession Law,' and this wave of pressure could also become the basis for the Green and Blue political parties in the country to unite and love Taiwan. In other words, the governing team should play the role of an initiator. The ability to initiate here does not lie in the 'proclamation of who could lead,' but lies in the ability to define the creation of issues.

B) "China Uses an Indirect Way to Usurp Pro-China Pan-Blue Political Parties to Paralyze the Arms Procurement Special Budget Bill"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] editorializes (5/28):

". In recent years, the Chinese government no longer pressures the U.S. authorities, and instead it indirectly uses the pro-China KMT and PFP's majority advantage in the Legislative Yuan to paralyze the arms procurement budget bill in the Legislative Yuan for the first time, and further puts pressure on the governing DPP administration, and forces Taiwan's decision-making authorities to deal with [problems] from two sides, on the one hand seeking the Pan-Blue legislators' understanding to support the passage of the arms procurement deal, on the other hand taking pressure because of the U.S. government's concerns or dissatisfaction. We think Washington should figure out the key to the question, which is that the reason the arms procurement budget bill has been boycotted by the Pan-Blue legislators several times is not because the DPP administration, led by President Chen Shui-bian, is intentionally shifting the responsibility for Taiwan national defense, but it is because the Chinese government intentionally usurps Taiwan's two pro-China political parties to delay the review procedure for the arms procurement budget bill.

"We think the KMT party headquarters cannot neglect the symbolic meaning of the letter co-signed by 33 U.S. congressmen to [KMT Chairman] Lien Chan, [because the letter means that] the U.S. Congress has become aware of the fact that Lien Chan plays an important role in the continuous boycott process of the arms procurement budget bill; unless the KMT never becomes Taiwan's governing party, otherwise it will never be possible for a political party which disregards Taiwan's national defense to such a degree to gain the U.S. government's trust and support."

C) "Be Aware Of China's Use of Cover to Peacefully Annex Taiwan"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 800,000] editorialized (5/31):

". China has used Taiwan as an excuse for its military buildup. As China's economy picks up, its capability of military expansion grows significantly. Under the cover of 'peaceful rise,' the real situation is that China is moving to become a military giant. China thinks of itself as Asia's economic powerhouse [and is thus] qualified to become the leader in the region. The strong U.S. military presence, meanwhile, is viewed by China as the biggest enemy for its annexation of Taiwan and taking the leadership of all of Asia. Therefore, China has aggressively sought to break the First Island Chain and to squeeze the U.S. zone in the West Pacific. It is widely known that Chinese submarines have breached the First Island Chain several times during their operations."

"Now, leaders of the Pan-Blue camp are rushing to Beijing to establish so-called communication platforms, while the long-delayed military procurement budget is still stranded in the procedural committee of the Legislative Yuan. We are concerned that with opposition parties blocking the budget and cooperating with the Beijing authorities, China only has to use some trick such as pretending it plans to remove missiles, [whereby] it can [then] peacefully annex Taiwan without firing a missile."

PAAL